2: Hockings E-4,5 (1962-1977) 1980
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population, illegal hunting and poisoning of carnivors, and the great extension in the area of tea estates, predatory tigers and other large animals have become so rare on the plateau that there seems little need to propitiate Be:da Sa:mi.

Lingayats, over the past century at least, have taken up the worship of gods other than Shiva. The non-Lingayat Badagas have also adopted new gods, mostly Sanskritic deities related to Shiva, such as his sons Gaṇapati and Subramaṇia, and also Aiyappan. A parochialization of the great Hindu tradition is evinced in the temple established at Tu:raṭṭi for a stone brought there from Benares, or the silver image of Subramaṇia brought to a Ka:ṭe:ri temple from Benares, or the 'footprint of Ra:ma' on a rock at Mañjakombe.

BAJAN AND KRISHNA WORSHIP

These styles of worship are new to the Badagas, who are Shaivites (Krishna and Ra:ma are Vaishnavite deities) (Karl, 1945, 5). The performance of *bajan* (group hymns) began amongst them some thirty years ago, and so popular has it become that nearly every village has one or more sets of *bajan* instruments and holds a weekly performance of the sacred songs. These are hymns mostly in praise of the Lord Krishna; they are played on the instruments of Tamilnad, not of the Nilgiris, and the words are Tamil, not Badagu. Many villages have built a *bajan* house specifically for these devotional evenings; it is owned by the village in common and is considered a kind of temple. Inside are lithographic prints of Krishna and other gods and perhaps an image to which *pu:ja* is performed during the course of the devotions. Once a year donations are solicited from every household in the village for support of the *bajan* singing group. Not every villager is interested in this form of worship, but its popularity is clearly increasing, especially among the youths who regard it as a modern, urban form of worship. The rising interest in *bajan* has been noted elsewhere in South India (Singer, 1959, 148–149).

TAMILIAN AND KANARESE CELEBRATIONS

Heavy immigration to the hills, together with greatly improved communications with the plains to the north and east, especially

177 As the wealth of such families increases, and as the possibility of their upward
556 mobility, as modern Indian families rather than as Badaga villagers, becomes a
829 reality, their attitudes toward Nilgiri society and its marriage regulations change. No longer are the requirements of the traditional culture so demanding or so relevant; for these people are now oriented towards a larger South Indian society, a society whose aims and ideals are stated -- albeit in exaggerated form -- in the morality and cultural equipment of modern romantic Indian films.

Religious Change since 1913

178 Four kinds of religious change have affected various sections of the Badaga community during the present century. These changes are not directly related to each other, and need to be considered separately:

1) Bhajan and Kriśna worship have become popular;

2) The Lingayats have developed their previously tenuous ties with Lingayats in Mysore State;

3) A few distinctively Tamilian and Kanarese festivals and rituals have been adopted;

4) A Roman Catholic community has appeared among the Badaga Christians.

These developments will each be discussed in turn.

796 1) Bhajan and Kriśna worship are new to the Badagas: Kriśna is
[796] a Vaiśnavite deity, the Badagas are Śaivites. The performance of bhajan (group
(795) hymns) began among Badagas some 20 or 25 years ago; so popular has it now become, nevertheless, that nearly every hamlet has one or more sets of bhajan instruments, and there is a regular -- often a weekly -- performance of the sacred
●533 songs. Bhajan songs are devotional hymns, generally in praise of the lord Kriśna;
177 they are played on the instruments of Tamilnād, not of the Nilgiris, and the words

177 are Tamil, not Badagu. Very many of the Badaga hamlets have built a bhajan house
•533 specifically for use during evenings of devotion. Such houses are owned by the ham-
368 let in common and are considered as temples. Inside the bhajan house will be a num-
423 ber of lithographic prints of Kriśna and other gods, and perhaps an image. During
178 the course of a devotional evening, puja will be done to the image or to some of the
182 lithographs. Not everyone in a hamlet is interested in the bhajan form of worship,
178 however; but its popularity is clearly increasing, for it has its strongest following
196 among the village youths. Once a year small donations are offered for the support
(431) of the bhajan group by every household in the hamlet where it is performed. An in-
creasing interest in bhajans has been noted elsewhere in South India (cf. Singer 1959:
148-49).

177 2) Lingayats, too, have developed their ties with the
195 plains. Before this century they knew little about the Vīraśaiva religion in their
Mysore home-land. Perhaps once a year a Lingayat guru would wander up into the
Nilgiris from Nanjangud (so says Harkness 1832: 137); but whatever he might be able
to teach about the Lingayat faith would have to be transmitted entirely by word of
mouth. In the 20th Century, on the other hand, the Badaga Lingayats have become
literate, and some of them read books on Lingayat philosophy quite avidly. Cheap
transportation has also enabled them to make pilgrimages to some of the places that
are sacred in Vīraśaiva belief, and to meet well-informed monks and Jangamas in
the towns of Mysore State.

177 One significant fruit of this increased contact has been the occurrence of a
582 number of marriages, during the present century, between Badaga Lingayat men and
Kanarese Lingayat girls; even a few of the conservative Wodeyas have taken this
(578) step. The move for marital links with Mysore has not been met with equanimity by

7: Hockings E-5 (1962-1977) 1987
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· 37 · *The Man Named Unige Mada (Nilgiri Hills, Tamilnadu)*

This next tale preserves some of the oral storytelling style of a folk bard and thus has a special grammatical flavor worthy of note. It comes from the Nilgiri Hills and was told by a Badaga. These people represent one of several important communities who have long resided in this anthropologically well-known district of Tamilnadu. These, plus a few other groups, together form a relatively isolated caste-like system. However, this whole population is so small and distinctive that it is generally called tribal. The Todu group stands at the top of this hierarchy and are the priests and buffalo keepers. Next come the Badaga who are farmers, and under them are the Kurumba who are sorcerers, and then the Kota, who are known as artisans and musicians.

The following story depicts a Kurumba who came to a Badaga in a time of need, and eventually became his dependent. In this sense it serves as a kind of origin tale for traditional Badaga-Kurumba social relations. It also portrays the Badaga as keepers of fine buffalo herds. Buffalo ownership is often linked to the status claims of the Todas, even though many Badaga own such animals too. In this sense the present tale also asserts the wealth of the Badaga community vis-à-vis the ritual importance of buffalo for the Todas. However, since no reference is made to the highly important Kota group, it is clear that the tale of Unige Mada stops short of providing a general charter for Nilgiri society. This Badaga tale would normally be told in the form of a narrative song. It would be sung before a group of Badagas during a lull in some ritual event.

On quite another level, this tale is also interesting for what it says about hospitality. The Badaga invites an exhausted Kurumba into his house and nurses him lovingly back to health. For this act of generosity his family can expect to enjoy much future prosperity. Such actions help counteract diaster and starvation, not only in an immediate sense, but also in the long run. The images of prosperity used are especially important. The teller speaks of many children under the Badaga's arm, grandchildren on his lap and great grandchildren under his widespread shawl. A similar formulaic phrase, used by bards on the plains just